

2007 Barrier Reef Teams

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This year the Barrier Reef Congress was held in Mackay, and for the Teams I joined Lindy Vincent and Richard Ward for my first, but not last, time in the event. Therese Tully was originally our 4th, but she was playing for Australia in the Far East Tournament in Indonesia around the same time, and I was lucky enough to get John Brockwell to play with instead.

Fred Whitaker, Andy Braithwaite, Mike Robson and Betty Lee only won their last match by 16-14, but had built up such a huge lead by this time that they still won by 11 VPs. I had a lot of sympathy for the Rodgers team, (K & S Rodgers, P. Barnett & I. Wright), who averaged 21 VPs for the 8 matches, but still finished a distant 2nd.

Our team languished in the pack until the halfway stage, from where 4 good wins were enough to put us into 3rd place. While we only had 1 narrow loss, our form was so patchy that we did not play any team in the top 12, and were never high enough to challenge the Whitaker team, let alone play against them.

M 1	JT75				On board 2 in match 1 an item for systemic clarification arose that should be discussed by all partnerships that use transfers and Lebensohl after partner opens or overcalls 1NT.
Bd 2	JT				
Dir E	AKQ				
Vul NS	KQ54				If East had passed, we play system on, and 2NT by John is a transfer to 3C, which he intended to pass. However, is it the same meaning when East raises his partner's suit as occurred in our auction?
AK9		8432			
AQ82		K974			
J832		9654			I concluded that it was not and passed what I thought was an invitation, but John was intending 2NT to have the same meaning.
T7		J			
	Q6				
	653				In our system 2NT always asks partner to bid 3C, but what if 2S is a transfer to clubs in an uncontested auction, does the 2D raise by East now bring Lebensohl into play where 2NT is transfer to clubs and 2S is to play?
	T7				
	A98632				
W	N	E	S		
		/	/		
1D	1NT	/	2NT		In 2NT East led a mundane D6 and I was able to claim a quick-fire 9 tricks for +150. At the other table NS finished in 3NT and Richard and Lindy looked elsewhere for potential tricks and the heart lead netted the first 6 tricks for +200 and 8 Imps.
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M 1	AKT6				On board 12 in match 1 I was possibly heading for defeat in my 5H contract until East got too busy in defense. East had announced a powerful minor two-suiter during the short bidding sequence, which I believed, so with few defensive tricks, I went one more.
Bd 12	KQJ6543				
Dir W	7				
Vul NS	6				
QJ5		4			East cashed the CA and after seeing the dummy switched to the S4, West playing a deceptive SQ. IF EW had cashed a diamond next and exited with a diamond or a trump, I have to play West for the actual spade holding to make 11 tricks.
T		82			
A54		KQT96			
QJ9854		AKT72			
	98732				After drawing trumps finishing in dummy, I was now ready to use the bidding, with the added advantage that one round of spades had already been played. From the bidding it seemed much more likely that East had 5-5 in the minors (and therefore 1 spade) than that he had precisely 2254, and had led from J4, so I finessed again and made 12 tricks.
	A97				
	J832				
	3				
W	N	E	S		
/	1H	2D	2H		
/	4H	5C	/		
/	5H	//			At the other table North was not so lucky and lost 3 tricks in 5H for 13 Imps to us.

M 1 AQJT53
Bd 14 -
Dlr E AKQ
Vul Nil KJ95
742 K98
652 KT743
J732 954
A76 83

6
AQJ98
T86
QT82

W	N	E	S
/	2C	/	2D
/	2S	/	3H
/	4C	/	6C
//			

On board 14 in match 1 I thought that my playing tricks qualified the North hand as a 2C opening, but lost a little enthusiasm when John introduced his heart suit, especially when he then raised my 4C to slam, as he had initially denied an Ace and a King. If John had clubs it was likely that 4S would make, but 6C could be too high if he had too much in hearts.

East led a trump and when I was winning the second round I had a number of options for 10 tricks:

1. Win in dummy to take the spade finesse and ruff the spades good.
2. Win in hand, draw the last trump and take the spade ruffing finesse.
3. Trump spades without a finesse and hope the SK comes down in 3 rounds.

Prompted by East's trump lead I elected to take the second option, which was successful and we scored up +920. Alas this was a flat board as declarer at the other table opted for the inferior 3rd line, which was also successful.

M 2 QT2
Bd 16 Q
Dlr W QJT6
Vul EW KJT97
9764 KJ853
542 KJ86
75 42
Q832 64

A
AT973
AK983
A5

W	N	E	S
/	/	/	1H
/	2C	/	2D
/	2NT	/	3NT
//			

On board 16 in match 2 we missed what should have been an easy slam.

The key bid that caused us to miss the slam was my 2NT bid instead of 3D, both of which are non-forcing. I had good intermediate cards, but spades is obviously our weak suit, and playing teams, 3D was more descriptive.

John could have saved us by rebidding 4D instead of 3NT (3D would not have been forcing), but that is a big decision, especially when he has a bonus SA to give me.

In 3NT East led the S5 and I could take the club finesse with safety after cashing 2 diamonds, but when that suit broke badly I could not let West in so led the HQ, covered by East.

After running my diamonds, East was thrown in with the HJ to give me a spade for 11 tricks and +460, which was a 1 Imp gain when NS subsided in 5D at the other table for -440.

M 2 AQ95
Bd 18 QT97653
Dlr E T5
Vul NS -
T2 J87
J A84
J63 842
AQJT632 9754

K643
K2
AKQ97
K8

W	N	E	S
		/	1D
2C	2H	3C	4H
/	5C	/	5D
	6H	//	

On board 18 in match 2 we got lucky when John picked a good time to support my hearts with just K2 as his support. If he had passed the 3C bid, I may have shown my spade suit (but more likely rebid the 7-card suit first), and then we could have been in 6S which goes off via the heart ruff.

If I had his hand, I would have either passed 3C to see what developed or bid 3S (unlikely to be able to play 3NT now), or shown my club stopper and less than 3 hearts with 3NT. Over 3S the wrong slam may have been reached (played by the hand that puts the HJ on lead) and over 3NT the obvious 4H may have ended the auction.

After the opening club lead I was initially a little surprized to see only 2 hearts in dummy, but after ruffing this I had to decided how to tackle the hearts to take advantage of a singleton honour with East or West.

West was more likely to have a singleton heart, so after a diamond to dummy I led a heart off the table and could claim when the HJ appeared. +1430 was 13 Imps.

M 2 9
Bd 24 AT9832
Dir W A652
Vul Nil 86
 KQJ6 743
 74 Q65
 KQ87 93
 AQ9 T7432

 AT852
 KJ
 JT4
 KJ5

W	N	E	S
1NT	2D	2NT	3H
/	4H	//	

Sometimes when you make an assumption about the bidding and what it shows you end up with egg on your face, but on board 24 in match 2 John was sure that my single-suiter was not spades. East has a 5-card minor, depending on whether 2NT was a simple transfer or either minor, and since hearts was his short suit he guessed hearts!

As can be seen he came up smelling of roses, and I raised his unexpected heart bid to game. If he had passed, I would have bid 3H myself and we would still have reached game.

The key to the hand is to make South declarer, as North is easily defeated in 4H by a diamond lead, which eliminates the endplay. At the other table, 4H was played by South, but they did not find the endplay and finished 1 down.

At our table I would like to have been able to describe the intricate endplay that enable John to garner 10 tricks, but West led the CA, and followed this up with the DK, so 10 tricks were there even though a heart was lost.

M 3 -
Bd 12 J87652
Dir W KQ942
Vul NS J6
 J876543 AKQ2
 Q43 -
 8 AT5
 98 AKT532

 T9
 AKT9
 J763
 Q74

W	N	E	S
/	2H	X	2NT
4S	/	6S	//

On board 12 in match 3 West elected to pass as dealer and I showed hearts and a minor by opening 2H, over which East started with a double, and John's 2NT was asking for the second suit.

West got carried away with the 7-card suit and jumped to 4S, after which East showed restraint by only bidding 6S, but this proved an easy make when West had the perfect minor suit cards, and 13 tricks rolled in.

John tried to feign strength by his 2NT bid and disguise the heart fit, but maybe if he had just bid a direct 4H, West's 4S may not have excited East to the same degree as the jump to 4S. At least John knew that we were not cashing 2 heart tricks and was not tempted to double.

At the other table the bidding was not so enterprising and slam was not reached so we lost 11 Imps.

M 4 T5
Bd 20 T92
Dir W AKT9532
Vul All 6
 Q62 AJ984
 K65 AQJ83
 Q 4
 AQJ843 KT

 K73
 74
 J876
 9752

W	N	E	S
1C	2D	2S	/
3C	3D	4H	//

Board 20 in match 4 was a puzzle in the bidding and it looked like we had lost at least 1 Imp and maybe as many as 13 when East showed both majors and West gave preference to his 2nd suit by passing 4H!

The bidding by East suggested both majors, and either equal length or with spades longer, so although it was likely that East had 5 hearts, he could have had 6 spades.

In 4H we could take our diamond trick but not our spade trick as East could draw trumps and take 6 clubs, 5 hearts and 1 spade for 12 tricks in all, but in 4S, after the obvious diamond lead, we could not be denied a spade trick as well.

Thus it looked like Richard and Lindy may get to 6S going down, or at best only play in 4S making 11 tricks for 1 Imp loss.

However they did even better than EW by getting to slam, but in hearts, so we picked up 13 Imps.

M 4 KQ8
Bd 22 92
Dlr E AKQJ8765
Vul EW -
T92 J7643
Q8763 T
2 94
9863 AQ754

A5
AKJ54
T3
KJT2

W	N	E	S
/	2D	/	1H
/	4C	X	3S
/	6D	//	XX

It is said that nothing is certain except death and taxes, but when we did not get to the grand slam on board 22 in match 4 it seemed that we were bound to lose Imps on the board.

We had agreed that a jump shift by responder showed a self-supporting suit, so John's 3S was a cue-bid in support of diamonds, as was my 4C.

John's redouble showed 2nd round control, which did not help my hand a great deal, so I signed off in 6D, hoping that he did not have too much in clubs and at least a solid trick in hearts.

The sight of dummy was a little surprizing, as he had seen me bid slam, and he had an AK that he had not shown, so the grand slam must have been a good chance.

I need not have worried, as at the other table they did not get to slam so we picked up 11 Imps after all, and the grand would have only been another 3.

M 4 K72
Bd 26 KT76
Dlr E A962
Vul All T8
T5 AQJ43
J82 543
QJ7 K8543
A9743 -

986
AQ9
T
KQJ652

W	N	E	S
/	1H	/	1C
/	2NT	1S	2H
3S	X	3D	/
		//	

On board 26 in match 4 we got the bidding right, but screwed up the defense something awful.

East did a lot of bidding for a passed hand, and should have paid a penalty of at least -500, but instead wrote down +730!

The CK was just too tempting as a lead, and declarer won in dummy pitching a heart loser and finessed the ST successfully, followed by another trump to the SQ.

Now there are 10 tricks, but declarer decided not to risk the 9 tricks they already had by banking on a 3-3 trump break, so led a diamond to dummy and John got a diamond ruff to hold declarer to 9 tricks.

On an initial diamond lead, we can get 2 diamond ruffs and 3 heart tricks for 2 down.

At the other table Richard and Lindy also had a 'double'-disaster, South playing in 2CX for 8 tricks and -180 for a total loss of 14 Imps.

M 5 52
Bd 1 K9
Dlr N KT5
Vul Nil AJ6532
T763 AK84
AQJT3 87652
83 96
Q9 T4

QJ9
4
AQJ742
K87

W	N	E	S
1H	1C	/	1D
/	2C	2H	3H
	3NT	//	

It is hard enough to guess what your partner is going to do some of the time, let alone try and try and predict the field.

On board 1 in match 5 we bid to a routine 3NT after West overcalled 1H, and East dutifully led the H8, ducked by West.

Now there were 13 top tricks when clubs were friendly, and we scored up +520, for a good match point score, but only a couple of Imps at the most under teams scoring, or so we thought.

The board average was only -130, so we picked up an unlikely 9 Imps.

EW have a fit in both majors, but the sacrifice of 4H has 6 unavoidable losers, and only bad defence would allow 4S to escape for 2 off, so either NS were timid and stayed out of game when EW got involved, or we were foolhardy and got lucky.

M 5 8
Bd 5 QJ3
Dlr N QJT752
Vul NS Q64
 T76432
 K876
 83
 9

	AJ5		
	A954		
	K64		
	K75		

W	N	E	S
/	2D	1C	1NT
/	3D	3C	/
		//	

On board 5 in match 5 I elected to play in a part score with my soft values and no way to find out the strength of the fit, but was happy to bid again when East rebid his club suit.

John looked at the 3D rebid and his good support, but his minimum hand and single club stop was more than enough to deter him from bidding 3NT, especially since I had not made any attempt to invite game.

Since everything is friendly and my club honour gives us a double stop, 3NT would likely have rolled home. After the lead of the SK, when East won the DA he did not play his partner for a singleton club, so 3D made exactly 9 tricks against a board average of +100, and 5 Imps to us.

This was not the time to be having transfer sequences after the 1NT overcall, especially forcing to the 3-level, as if South is declarer in a 3D contract, the obvious lead of the C9 gives it no chance except inept defence.

M 6 AT7
Bd 15 Q6
Dlr S A754
Vul NS J732
 J
 KT9
 KT2
 AQT965

	Q8654		
	A754		
	J3		
	K4		

W	N	E	S
2C	/	2D	/
3C	//		

Board 15 in match 6 was curious part-score hand that netted us 10 Imps when the part-scores failed at both tables.

At our table East was hoping to find a fit with the 2D inquiry for a major, but only succeeded in keeping us out of the auction and forcing West up to the 3-level.

Not knowing what to lead I decided to look at dummy first and laid down the DA, and since John's D3 was encouraging, led another.

Declarer, with few entries to the table now led the HT, and I rose with the HQ to take stock of trick 2. John's DJ was very revealing, as it showed that declarer had the DT, and therefore John could ruff the next diamond.

The D7 was ruffed and a spade returned for me to lead another diamond for John to ruff with the CK, overruffed. Now declarer could cash the CQ and lead another, but I could win the CJ and put John in with the HA for a heart ruff and 3 off for +150. At the other table NS did find their spade fit, but -300 in 3S was more points to us.

M 6 543
Bd 17 Q86
Dlr N 8632
Vul Nil Q96
 962
 AJ75
 JT95
 82

	AKJ8		
	K4		
	AKQ74		
	73		

W	N	E	S
/	/	2C	X
/	2D	/	3C
/	3NT	//	

Board 17 in match 6 was a disappointment to both pairs.

At our table John doubled the 2C opening bid (Precision) and when I bid his long suit he asked for a club stop and I duly obliged by bidding 3NT.

Things did not look good from my side of the table when the CJ was led and dummy went down, but when I won the CQ at trick 1, prospects looked pretty rosy as 3NT appeared to depend on the spade finesse through the opening bidder.

The successful spade finesse at trick 2 would have enabled me to escape for 1 down, but before taking the crucial finesse I wanted to exert maximum discard pressure by running 4 diamond tricks finishing in hand to take the spade finesse. The roof caved in when East showed out on the 1st round of diamonds and I went 2 off.

At the other table Richard and Lindy got to 4HX, and the bad lie of the spades meant 1 off and 5 Imps away.

M 6 KT
Bd 28 AQ98753
Dir W J9
Vul NS J7
72 Q9654
JT4 6
AQ8754 KT6
K4 AJ95

 AJ83
 K2
 32
 QT862

W **N** **E** **S**
/ 4H //

What a difference a leads makes! On board 28 in match 6 I thought that 3H was a little weak so went all the way by opening 4H, passed out.

With nothing to base a lead on, now may have the ideal time for East to lay down the CA to look at dummy, but if EW were playing high encouraging, they would have been no worse off.

However, East unwisely decided to attack by leading the S5, and now there was no defence to 4H.

I won the opening lead with the SK to preserve the finesse position and then drew trumps. It looked like the spade finesse was on, so I had only to take the finesse for 10 tricks, but just in case, a few extra trumps would not hurt, and East let go a couple of spades, so I made 11 tricks for +650.

At the other table NS did not get to game, and just as well as Richard and Lindy defended accurately to hold them to 9 tricks and 11 Imps.

M 7 J3
Bd 5 K3
Dir N 764
Vul NS AJT542
K752 6
AQ9862 JT754
J3 QT82
9 Q87

 AQT984
 -
 AK95
 K63

W **N** **E** **S**
/ / / 1S
2H 3C 3H 3S
4H 4S 5H X
//

We were out-maneuvered on board 5 in match 7 when we elected to double the 5H contract rather than try for 11 tricks ourselves, and only got +300 for our trouble when the club trick got away.

It looked like we should have been able to make 11 tricks in spades for +650, but nothing is certain as at the other table Richard and Lindy took 4S off 1, so we gained 9 Imps after all!

In 4S the opening lead of the HA was ruffed, but the trick did not help declarer and they eventually lost a spade, a club and 2 diamonds.

Deep Finesse suggests that 12 tricks can be made, but it requires careful planning and taking the right view in clubs. A wrong play and 5S would have been in jeopardy, so we were right to double 5H.

In 6S declarer wins the lead of the DJ (best) and leads a small trump towards dummy. West does best to rise with the SK and lead the other diamond, but declarer wins this and enters dummy with the SJ to advance the CJ, letting it run if East does not cover. Now declarer ruffs a heart to hand to draw all of the trumps and the clubs are good.

M 7 A7
Bd 13 643
Dir N QT65
Vul All AK97
K653 T982
J AT982
K92 3
85432 QJT

 QJ4
 KQ75
 AJ874
 6

W **N** **E** **S**
/ 1NT / 2S
/ 3C / 3H
/ 3NT //

Minor suit games are played a lot more in teams events than in pairs events, but it is still often easier to make 9 tricks than 11, and this was true for board 13 in match 7.

At Richard and Lindy's table, NS played in 5D by North, and this would have been a good contract if the diamond finesse had worked. When it failed however, West was able to lead back the HJ and get a heart ruff to defeat the contract by 1 trick.

At our table John's 2S was Baron, and my 3C showed two 4-card suits, one of which was clubs. Since I had the clubs, he was not interested in bypassing 3NT unless we had a heart fit, so he did not mention his diamond suit.

Note that if the diamond finesse is right, 3NT is an easy contract, so his judgement was right. In spite of John's natural 3H, East still led the HT, and I had an easy 11 tricks for +66 and 13 Imps.

M 7 AKQ762
Bd 14 954
Dir E T7
Vul Nil 64
 JT3 84
 Q72 JT3
 Q86 KJ53
 QJT3 A984

95
 AK86
 A942
 K62

W	N	E	S
/	2H	/	1NT
/	4S	//	2S

On board 14 in match 7 I had no idea if 4S was a good contract, and there was no way to find out, so I just transferred to spades and put John into game.

In retrospect, since opposite a weak 1NT I needed the spades to be solid, I should have just bid 3NT without revealing the spade suit, but since John made 11 tricks I did not think about it at the time.

In 4S West has an obvious opening lead of the CQ, but when East sees dummy, they should realize that firstly there is no future in clubs, and secondly that the spades are running.

Accordingly, East should win the CA at trick 1 and switch to the D3 or the HJ as the best hope for the defence to take 4 tricks. The D3 works best on this hand, although it only holds the contract to 10 tricks, but the HJ will defeat the hand if West has AQ in the suit.

At the other table NS played in a safe 2S and made the same 11 tricks, but 6 Imps to us.

M 8 Q954
Bd 16 AKJ43
Dir W KJ73
Vul EW -
 K632 8
 Q7 9852
 AT64 5
 Q73 AJT8542

AJT7
 T6
 Q982
 K96

W	N	E	S
/	1H	3C	X
/	3S	/	4S
//			

It appears to be against the odds to lead a singleton of an unbid suit when you only have a singleton trump. Too often you will ruin your partner's holding in the suit and when he gets the lead on even the first round of trumps, you have no trump to ruff with. Holding a doubleton trump it is a different story, as you get your ruff if partner has the Ace of the suit led, or the trump Ace.

On board 16 in match 8 East may have felt that they had no choice so they did lead their singleton trump, found partner with the Ace and got their ruff. However, the lead gave up partner's potential 2nd trick in diamonds, and when they received the ruff they were endplayed. A club switch would not have helped, and the heart exit set up the heart suit and 4S was made in some comfort in spite of the 4-1 trump break.

At the other table NS got their wires crossed and ended up if 5H, which had no chance, and finished up 2 down for a total of +520 and 11 Imps.

M 8 A53
Bd 21 K6543
Dir N T43
Vul NS Q8
 K96 42
 J2 97
 KJ98 AQ65
 K752 JT963

QJT87
 AQT8
 72
 A4

W	N	E	S
/	/	/	1S
/	2H	/	4H
//			

On board 21 in match 8 I was a little too strong for a simple raise on what could have been a 4-card suit, so as a passed hand I showed a reasonable hand with a 5-card suit by bidding 2H, raised to game by John.

The opening lead of the CJ did not look like a lead away from the King, so I won in dummy, drew trumps in 2 rounds and led the SQ, half expecting it to lose and see EW cash the next 4 tricks.

To my delight West made the mistake of covering the SJ on the next round, so I was able to pitch 2 losers on the spades and make 11 tricks for +650. Of course looking at the dummy West can see that they cannot gain by covering, but it only cost 1 trick as game is cold.

At the other table, NS did not find their heart fit, but did not get to game either, and 2S made 11 tricks for 10 Imps to us. Actually spades or hearts play better with South declarer as the club suit is safe from attack and 11 tricks are cold in either suit.

M 8
Bd 24
Dlr W
Vul Nil
T953
8
AJ43
K932

K864
T96
9852
Q5

AQJ72
AQ52
-
J864

-
KJ743
KQT76
AT7

W	N	E	S
/	/	1S	2S
3S	/	4S	//

On board 24 in match 8 John described his shape as either 5521 or 5530 by his 2S overcall. While I knew we had a heart fit of sorts, I expected his other suit to be clubs, so there was never any danger of us getting to the 5-level.

East won the DK at trick 1 pitching a club, and took the winning spade finesse, getting the bad news about the break. Another spade followed to his Queen, and then a club towards dummy, John rising with the CA and exiting with a club.

Now declarer has 10 tricks by way of 5 trumps, 1 heart, 1 diamond, 1 club and 2 heart ruffs. However, he either did not count his tricks, or tried for an overtrick by ducking the club, allowing me to win the CQ and return a diamond forcing him to ruff, and now he was 1 off.

He cannot draw any more trumps or he does not get his heart ruffs, and I got a club ruff as well as the SK for +50. At the other table, somehow NS found their diamonds fit, but 5DX was not a happy contract, going 4 off for +800 and 13 Imps to us.